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Probers' Report At Southern U.

Baton Rouge, La.

The state commission investigating the November 16 death of two Southern University students announced yesterday that officers started the exchange of tear gas between police and students at the scene of the fatal confrontacion.

"After viewing motion picture films frame by frame, still photographs, hearing witnesses and reviewing interviews taken by the attorney general's staff, the evidence is clear that the first object thrown was a tear gas canister and came from the law enforcement units, and not from the students," the commission said in a prepared statement.

The commission's conclusion contradicted statements by Governor Edwin Edwards and law enforcement officials that students began firing tear gas canisters at police.

INCIDENT

Edwards had stated numerous times earlier that films of the incident in front of the Southern administration building clearly showed the first tear gas canisters coming from inside the building.

The governor further stated the canisters came out of the building in such a way as to indicate they were fired from a launcher.

The two most controversial questions surrounding the death of students Denver S. Smith and Leonard D. Brown, both 20, had been the cause of the students deaths and who fired the projectiles that inflicted the fatal wounds.

The 12-member, biracial commission determined Thursday the students were killed by buckshots from a shotgun.

BUCKSHOT

"Our committee for all practical purposes has now determined that the two students that were killed were killed by buckshot," said Attorney General William Guste, chairman of the commission.

"The coroner's report shows that 10 or 11 shotgun pellets were removed from the bodies of the two students. In addition, the coroner's report clearly indicates the spherical nature of the entry wounds."

The commission finding in effect supports statements from student eyewitnesses to the incident at the mostly black campus that they only threw back tear gas canisters fired at them from deputy sheriff's shotguns.

The commission statement yesterday represented one of the first major findings revealed by the group, which has been holding hearings in secret.

Jim Carvin, spokesman for the commission, said it released the information "in order to clarify statements made by individuals and various public officials after the incident."

The two students were shot when law officers marched on the campus to clear out several hundred students who had occupied the administration building.

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